



Moro Rock seen from near Hospital Rock in the foothills on a very snowy day. @NPS Photo

Highlights

SEQUOIA PARK

BEFORE YOU GO: Review safety tips on page 5. Carry a map, warm clothes, and water. Orient yourself before heading out and tell someone where you are going. You are on your own — be safe!



Walkers & snowshoers: Watch for ice. Walking in ski tracks leaves them dangerous for skiers. **Watch for tracks.** Bear, deer, mountain lions, martens, weasels, coyotes, and squirrels may be active all winter. Remove coolers and odorous items from cars before you leave them.

Get to know the snow forest. Designed for snow, conical-shaped trees catch less snow, minimizing the amount that weighs them down. Their branches are flexible, so they bend to dump what snow does stick

when it gets too heavy. Conifer needles are tough and slippery, so snow tends to slide off easily.

GIANT FOREST

There is plenty to see from wintry roadsides, but consider trying skis or snowshoes. You don't need to go far or fast, and it's a great way to enjoy snowy sequoia forests. Rent them downstairs at Wuksachi Lodge, and purchase a ski-trail map. Talk to a ranger, then carefully follow the yellow triangular markers on the trees.

GIANT FOREST MUSEUM: The best place to start your visit and learn about the Big Trees.

BIG TREES TRAIL: This 2/3-mile (1 km) trail circles Round Meadow. Colorful trailside panels describe sequoia ecology. Park at Giant Forest Museum or, once it is plowed, the small lot near Round Meadow. Then ski or snowshoe on either side of the road (not in the road). When there's no snow,

paved trails lead from the north end of the museum plaza, around the meadow, and back via the other side of the road.

GENERAL SHERMAN TREE:

Once much snow flies, access to the world's largest tree is from the parking area along the Generals Highway. The trail from there is not plowed, but snow is usually packed down enough to walk on it. Through late November, if conditions permit, the upper trail and parking stay open (take the Wolverton Road between the Sherman Tree and Lodgepole and follow signs). From there you walk down to the tree. While this upper option is open, the lower parking area along the Generals Highway requires an accessibility permit for parking. If the upper trail is too steep and you don't have an official placard, just ask for one at any visitor center. If you can walk down but not back up, have your driver pick you up at the lower parking area on the Generals Highway.

ALONG MORO ROCK - CRESCENT MEADOW ROAD

This 3-mile (5 km), dead-end road closes in winter to become a ski and snowshoe trail. It begins at the Giant Forest Museum on the Generals Highway, explores the southwest portions of the sequoia grove, and ends at Crescent Meadow. Highlights include:

MORO ROCK: A granite dome with a steep 1/4-mile (.4 km) staircase to the summit (300 foot / 91 m elevation gain). Don't climb if there is any ice or snow on the stairs; it is very dangerous. A spectacular view of the Great Western Divide and the western half of the park. 2 miles (3.2 km) from the Generals Highway.

TUNNEL LOG: A fallen sequoia that was tunneled through. The only "tree you can ski through" in these parks. 2.7 miles (4.3 km) from the Generals Highway.

CRESCENT MEADOW: Several trails connect here. It is 1 mile (1.6 km) from here to Tharp's Log, the hollow fallen sequoia lived in by Giant Forest's first settler. The summer High Sierra Trail runs 71 miles (114 km) to Mt. Whitney (highest peak in the lower 48 states — 14,494 feet / 4417 m).

MINERAL KING



The steep road to this valley closes at the park boundary November 1 to late May. Skis or snowshoes are required for winter visits. Page 8 has details.

THE FOOTHILLS

The lower elevations offer wonderful winter visits — green and usually snowless! They have more biological diversity — different kinds of plants and animals — than the conifer forests or High Sierra. Flowers appear in January. Ticks appear in December; watch for them and poison oak.



HOSPITAL ROCK PICNIC

AREA: Western Mono people once lived here; exhibits offer insight into their lifestyle. A trail built by the Civilian Conservation Corps leads to a waterfall; 1/4-mile round-trip. Be careful! Drownings have occurred here.

MARBLE FALLS: This trail climbs 3.9 miles (6 km) through chaparral to a lovely cascade. Park near site #14 at Potwisha Campground. Follow the dirt road across the concrete ditch. The trail starts along the steep bank to the right.

PARADISE CREEK: Park at Hospital Rock and walk to Buckeye Flat Campground. Follow the footpath across from site #26 & cross the footbridge over the Middle Fork. The trail then follows Paradise Creek, not the Middle Fork, for just over 1-1/2 mile (1.6 km) before growing faint.

MIDDLE FORK: Leading through chaparral to highcountry, the first miles offer views of Moro Rock and Castle Rocks. Park at Hospital Rock. Walk toward Buckeye Flat Campground but turn left on the dirt road before the campground. Go 1.3 miles (2 km) to a parking area. Panther Creek Falls is 3 miles (5 km) beyond that. Use caution at stream crossings.

SOUTH FORK

These trails start at tiny South Fork Campground (closed for winter), at the end of a 13-mile road that leaves Hwy 198 at the west end of Three Rivers. This partly unpaved road can be very slippery when wet.

LADYBUG: Hike along the South Fork of the Kaweah River in the upper foothills (moderately steep). From the campground, cross the river via footbridge. The trail ends 3 miles (5 km) up at one of the lowest-elevation sequoia groves.

GARFIELD: A steep 5-mile (8.3 km) one-way climb to Garfield sequoia grove. Start on the south side of the river in the campground.